

Content providers (broadcast, cable, and every other distribution mean) have been complaining about technologies which allow the consumer to record programming since VCRs first hit the market in the 70's. As digital technologies have made perfect copies available the chorus of complaints from Hollywood and New York has only gotten louder. If piracy is a problem, then focus on piracy.

While I understand the content providers desire to protect their property, I believe that proceeding 02-230 could actually put them in a far worse financial position. Mandating support for a copy protection flag on all digital television receivers will have a miniscule impact on piracy and will only thwart adoption of the technology by consumers. Predicted adoption rates won't be anywhere near reality and broadcasters will be forced to maintain 2 very expensive networks and infrastructures indefinitely rather than work towards a day when broadcasts can be 100% digital.

When a new technology comes out, a very, very small percentage of customers will adopt it immediately. The rest will only adopt it when the perceived benefits outweigh the costs. Moving these consumers from no to maybe to yes is even more difficult when a paradigm shift or perceived learning curve is involved.

Americans are accustomed to being able to record shows for later viewing. Whether it's on tape or a PVR like TiVo, they expect this functionality. If copy protection prevents them from being able to time shift on the same television, another television (such as in a bedroom or a friends house), as well as repeated viewings (if you have kids, you'll understand that sometimes you'll have to show that recording of this Friday's airing of Sesame Street half a dozen times over the weekend). If any of these or similar usages of the broadcast is prevented or even made difficult than it is today by a copy protection, HDTV receivers are going to gather dust on retailers shelves and broadcasters are going to be producing programming for a very very small audience of early adopters.

Tony Rice
204 Whiteberry Dr
Cary, NC 27519